

— High Street Methodist Church —



— Harpenden —

Discerning Together Our Vision & Strategy

A REPORT OF OUR General Church Meeting VISION DAY

Saturday 15 March 2014

MORNING SESSION

prepared by Rev Mark Hammond

*This, this is the God we adore,
our faithful, unchangeable friend,
whose love is as great as his power,
and neither knows measure nor end:*

*'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
we'll praise him for all that is past,
and trust him for all that's to come.*

Joseph Hart (1712-1768)

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1. A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

Dear All

This significant report is for everyone and anyone who has a heart for the work of God at High Street Methodist Church, Harpenden. I warmly encourage you to read it not only with care, but with much prayer.

This is a full report of what was shared when well over 100 of us gathered in the Church for the morning session of our General Church Meeting **Vision Day** on Saturday 15 March 2014. During this morning session we sought to discern, together, what we believe God is calling us to do and to be.

This report brings together three strands of information:

- a. **The first strand is the Bible:** Since the beginning of the new church year last September, many of the scriptures we have considered together have been about the true nature of the Church and the real purpose of Christian discipleship. Various sermons, studies and conversations about these Biblical insights have helped us to shape the substance of what follows.
- b. **The second strand is made up of facts and figures about this church:** During my first six months, as a newcomer, I have sought to gain an accurate picture of the health of this church. My key findings are fully described throughout this report and these, too, informed much of our thinking.
- c. **The final strand is the whole people of God:** As we prayerfully reflect about what the Bible and the facts and figures have to tell us about this church, we bring our varied experiences and perspectives to that reflection. The input of those who gathered together for Vision Day is collated in the Appendices and summarised in the shaded boxes that feature throughout this report.

My hope is that by reading this report even those who could not be present on the morning of Vision Day will feel they have shared in the experience, and also that those who were present can be fully reminded of all that we shared and concluded together.

I believe this whole report is of the utmost importance because it helps lead us towards the heart of what God is calling us to be and to do. I have attempted to summarize on page 17 our draft Vision and Strategy Statement which crystallises all that God appears to be saying to us.

May God continue to bless us all as we seek to be His faithful people,

Mark Hammond

2. GREEN SHOOTS: A new season of growth at High Street

'And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.'

Acts 2.47

As we gathered in the Church for our Vision Day the first signs of Spring were beginning to emerge outside. This seemed symbolic as a number of us had sensed that God may be leading us into a new season of spiritual growth. Like the large trees shooting green all around us, the established stature and strength of High Street Methodist Church is clearly the product of many previous seasons of healthy growth, and now again we can sense the emergence of new green shoots.

In small groups we listed the signs of growth we saw emerging at High Street Methodist Church. Alongside a general sense of increased expectancy, growing faith and heightened excitement, this exercise highlighted the precise areas of our life and work where new life and growth are evident. The full list we generated is given in Appendix 1, and these include:

- The introduction of new opportunities for prayer
- Our worship in all its variety
 - With growing attendance (most notably in the Hall)
 - More people using their gifts to sing, preach and lead worship
- Increased attendance at Junior Church
- More young families at Building Blocks, in worship, and requesting baptism
- An increasing breadth and vitality to our youth and schools' work
- New church members
- Growing outreach through such initiatives as SHARE and Alpha
- The vibrancy of Wesleys as a hub for the wider community
- Strengthening partnerships with other churches and agencies
- An increased use of technology and resources
- A new ministry team leader.

3. PEOPLE: The clay jar in which we hold our treasure

'But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.'

2 Corinthians 4.7

The evidence of God doing something new among us is something to welcome and celebrate. These wonderful signs of God-given life and growth should be set alongside some equally clear signs of our own frailty and fragility.

On the surface High Street Methodist Church appears to be a very large, strong and well-resourced community of faith. The underlying reality is somewhat weaker. The fundamental substance of a church is the people who make up its membership, and we are indeed blessed at High Street to have some very gifted, energetic and resourceful people. For very many years, however, the committed core of our church has been steadily shrinking and getting older. It is true that compared to many other

churches we are still relatively large. It is also true that every generation is represented among us. Even so, the fact is that we have for some time been in decline and are now considerably smaller, and on-the-whole, much older than we once were.

The extent of our decline can be seen in the official membership and attendance figures that are recorded each October.

a. Official Membership Figures

Official Methodist Church membership figures are notoriously difficult to keep accurately, but over time they do give a fair reflection of general trends, and this is certainly the case at High Street. Three decades ago the membership list of this church comprised 702 members. Since then it has steadily fallen by an average rate of 10 members a year, or 100 members a decade. The figure recorded in October 2013 was 402, representing a 42 per cent decline in just 30 years.

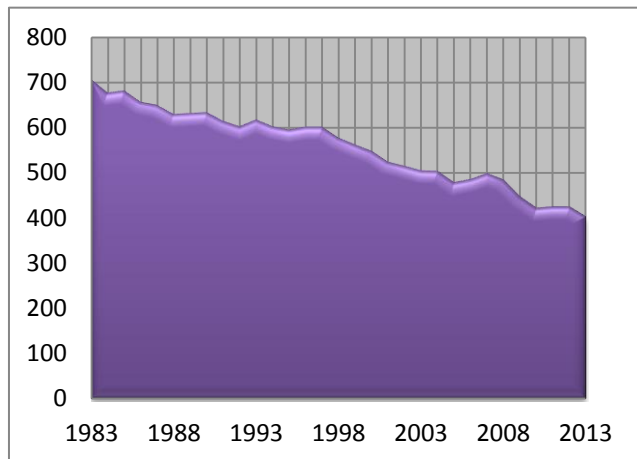


Figure 1 - HSMC Total Membership 1983-2013

Those who gathered for our Vision Day expressed a desire to see these trends reversed, and for the membership of High Street to start growing again.

b. Adult Attendance at Worship

A more accurate indication of our numeric strength is gained by looking at the number of people who worship with us each Sunday. Records show that in October 1983 an average of 433 adults attended worship. Twenty years later, this had more than halved to just 203.

More positively, however, in the past decade our attendance has fluctuated just above 200 adults. Last October's figure of 233 was the highest for seven years.

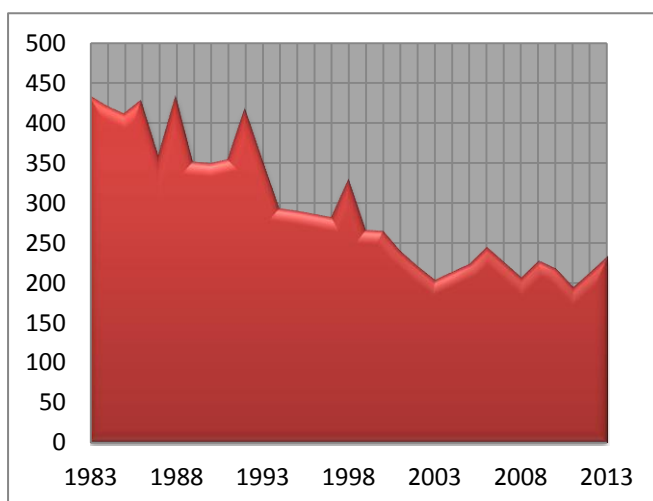


Figure 2 - HSMC Adult Attendance at Worship 1983-2013

These recent figures for High Street suggest that we are somehow "bucking the trend" as the national statistics for the entire British Methodist Church have continued to show a consistent and steady decline in attendance at worship. A significant factor in halting this decline was the introduction of our separate, contemporary Hall service in 2006.

An overwhelming majority of those who gathered for our Vision Day

expressed a desire for both our main congregations to start growing such that our adult attendance might even surpass that of the past.

c. Junior Church Attendance

Perhaps the most worrying attendance figures are those relating to the children among us. Where there was an average of 247 children in Junior Church in October 1984, in 2013 there were only 44.

Like adult attendance, most of the decline in our Junior Church occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. We can point to many factors that contributed to this decline: from the establishment of a Sunday School at St Nicholas's to the introduction of Sunday shopping, to the fact that various sports for young people now take place on Sunday mornings.

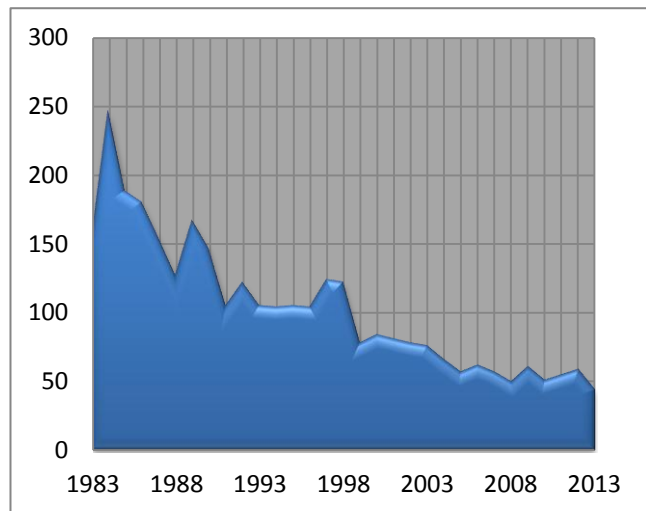


Figure 3 - Average Child Attendance on Sundays 1983-2013

Even so, over this same period of time some other churches have established and developed thriving and growing children and youth ministries, and we have recently seen our own attendance grow.

Those who gathered for our Vision Day expressed a desire to see the reversal of the historic decline of our Junior Church, that we may once again be catering for hundreds of children each Sunday.

d. Gender Mix of Worshippers

In order to gain a more comprehensive picture of those who worship at High Street, a census of both Church and Hall congregations was conducted one Sunday morning in March 2014.

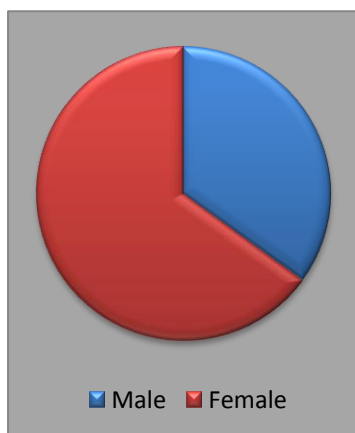


Figure 4 - High Street Worshippers

We know from the 2011 National Census that the population of Harpenden is approximately half female and half male, and yet our High Street congregations are about two-thirds female and one-third male.

There are few historic records about the congregational gender mix of yester-year, so we cannot say for certainty how this has changed with time, but it seems reasonable to suggest we might want better to reflect the gender split of the general population than we currently do. Those gathered for Vision Day concluded we would like to have, proportionally, more men.

e. Age Profile of Worshippers

Before we consider the age profile of High Street Methodist Church, it is worth setting the context by pausing to look at the age profile of Harpenden itself.

The 2011 Census demonstrates that, broadly speaking, the age profile of Harpenden is quite similar to that of England as a whole. The most striking difference is that where 14% of the population of England

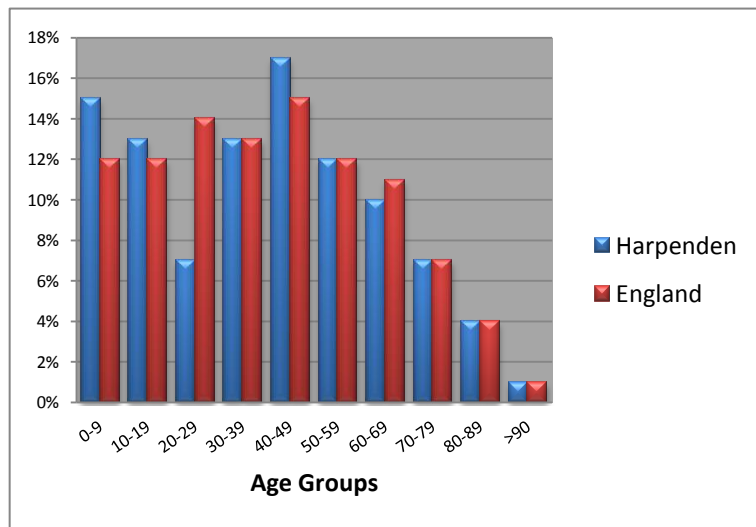


Figure 5 - Age Profile of Harpenden compared to England [2011 National Census]

is aged between 20 and 29, this age group makes up only 7% of Harpenden. Apart from that, Harpenden actually has proportionally more children and teenagers than England, and proportionally more people in their forties. Harpenden also has, proportionally, slightly fewer people in their sixties than England.

Perhaps the most interesting fact, is that Harpenden has just as many people in their twenties as it has in their seventies. So if our congregations lack people in their twenties we cannot really blame this on the lack of that age group outside our doors.

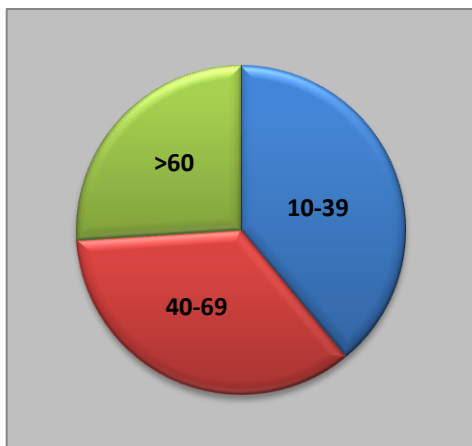


Figure 6 - Age Profile of Harpenden (2011 National Census)

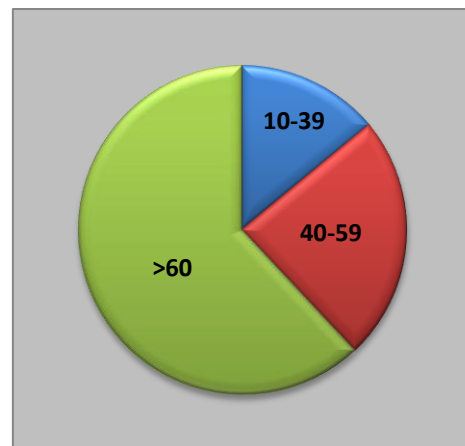


Figure 7 - Age Profile of High Street (2014 High Street Census)

Our recent congregational census confirms that the age profile of our worshippers is skewed towards the older end of the spectrum. Outside our doors only a quarter of the population is aged over sixty, whereas inside our doors we are almost two-thirds over sixty. The 40-69 age bracket is proportionally greater in Harpenden (35 per cent) than in High Street Methodist Church (25 per cent). The more striking difference is among those aged between 10 to 39 who account for 39 per cent of the Harpenden population but only 14 per cent of us.

Having reviewed all these facts and figures, those present on our Vision Day agreed the following conclusions. ***That we would like more:***

- ***Members of all ages***
- ***Worshippers of all ages and proportionally more:***
- ***Children and teenagers***
- ***Men***
- ***Young adults*** (by which we mean under-sixties!).

In small groups we considered what steps we might take to enable this church to better reflect the population of Harpenden. The full list we came up with is given in Appendix 2, and these include:

- Laying firm foundations of prayer and research
- Mobilising and equipping more volunteers to build the capacity we will need to operate on a larger scale
- Providing child-centred initiatives such as holiday clubs and games nights
- Establishing family-focused initiatives such as baby-sitting services to free up parents and a review of the timing and nature of whole-family events
- Providing inter-generational opportunities to bring all ages together
- Organising men-orientated events such as adventure sports, breakfasts and meetings in pubs
- Finding ways to maintain better contact with University students
- Providing events and opportunities that will grasp the interest of younger-adults and challenge them
- Raising up and equipping teenage leaders and give them responsibility
- Look creatively at the variety and timing of our worship.

4. MONEY: How joyfully generous are we?

'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver'

2 Corinthians 9.7

a. Summary

Our Finance Team has for some time now expressed concern about the long-term stability of our financial position. Whilst for some years we have been very successful in producing an annual balanced budget through a combination of increased giving and controlled costs, the future giving profile does indicate increased risk. It is important for us to look seriously at this area of our corporate life. A basic overview of the High Street Methodist Church finances can be summarised in the following six points:

1. *The responsibility for making ends meet is ours alone.*

In common with every other Methodist Church, High Street is constituted as an individually registered charity. This means that, whilst we are an integral part of the larger Methodist family or “Connexion”, our own Church Council are the Church’s managing trustees and have ultimate responsibility for all the affairs of the Church. We have developed a statement of the detailed responsibilities of trustees and a manual of detailed financial procedures under which these responsibilities are enacted, reviewed and controlled. This means that we are masters of our own destiny and there is no great central ecclesial bank feeding us money!

2. *We do not have millions in the bank!*

As a registered charity, we are not permitted to hold funds in excess of those reasonably required by our prudently-framed reserves policy as the Charity Commission obligates us to ensure that our income does actually get used for our charitable purposes. This suits us very well because as a Christian church we are keen to see all the resources we have - be they people, property or finances - being used for our Lord’s work.

3. *Our ‘free’ reserves will this year be down to £100,000.*

This is the amount of our uncommitted and unrestricted funds we are projecting to have at 31 August 2014, once our heating system has been modernised over the summer. This is safely in line with our reserves policy, which states that we aim to hold free reserves between three and six months of forward expenditure. Such reserves are currently just under five months which trustees feel are adequate having assessed forward financial risk.

4. *Our current running costs are around £250,000 a year.*

This is significant by Methodist Church standards but is wholly appropriate bearing in mind the broad range of services activates and outreach that we perform in the community. We are a large and diverse church – it’s our great strength.

5. *We have systems to manage unexpected and significant items of expenditure.*

We have established a number of designated funds which are ‘fed’ from our unrestricted funds to ensure that significant property expenditure of irregular incidence can be funded when required. We also have a number of restricted funds where our success in securing external and internal grants and donations are placed to support projects.

6. *Each year we raise around £20,000 for external charities.*

This amount is mainly raised through special collections for our chosen charities and via our Wesleys coffee shop.

The following facts and figures paint a more detailed picture:

b. An Overview of High Street's Finances

Given that we have relatively little room for manoeuvre, we very much rely on the prudent and careful stewardship of our Treasurer and Finance Team to balance our expenditure and income, and the historic review recently undertaken shows quite clearly that they do a wonderful job on our behalf.

As one would expect given ever increasing costs, each year our expenditure is greater than the year before. Over the past decade our expenditure has generally risen in line with inflation, which means that in real terms our finances have remained fairly static for the past ten years.

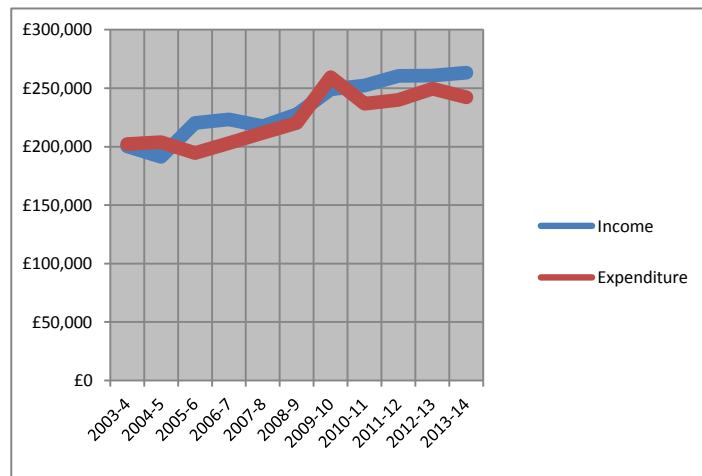


Figure 8 - HSMC Income and Expenditure 2003-2013

c. Our Items of Expenditure

So what do we spend our money on?

Our "Circuit Assessment" accounts for about half of all our expenditure. This money goes into various Connexional funds, to finance ministry and personnel. To be specific, at High Street, this currently pays for our Presbyteral and Diaconal Ministers. It also pays for the provision of our Ministers' accommodation and expenses. A smaller part of it is our contribution towards the costs of Methodism at Circuit, District and Connexional levels.

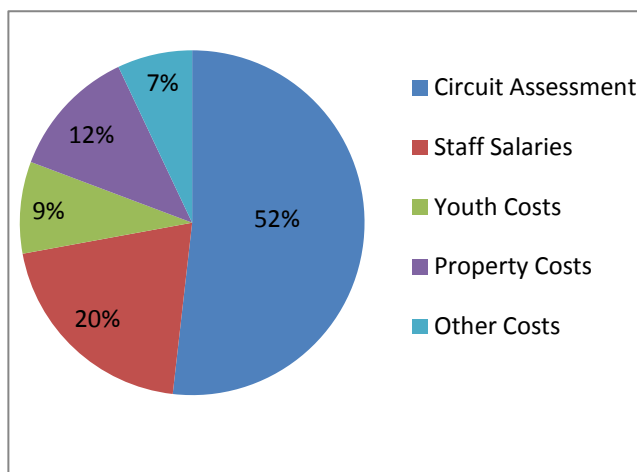


Figure 9 - HSMC Expenditure 2013-14

Apart from the Circuit Assessment, an additional 20 per cent of our expenditure pays for our Caretaking and Office Staff and 9 per cent pays for the costs of our Youth Pastor (net of grant support). This means that **just over 80 per cent of all our unrestricted expenditure goes on personnel related costs**. The remaining 19 per cent goes mainly on predominantly fixed property and administrative costs.

d. Our Sources of Income

Where do we get our money?

Just over half of our unrestricted income comes from the pledged, regular giving of members and supporters of High Street Methodist Church, either through the envelope scheme, annual cheque payments or, increasingly, via standing order with their bank. In the financial year 2013-14 our pledged giving is projected to total £141,000.

It is very helpful that many of our pledged givers also Gift Aid their giving. This means that we are able to claim back from HM Revenue and Customs the income tax relating to their gifts, and this additional amount is where 12 per cent of our income (£32,094) comes from.

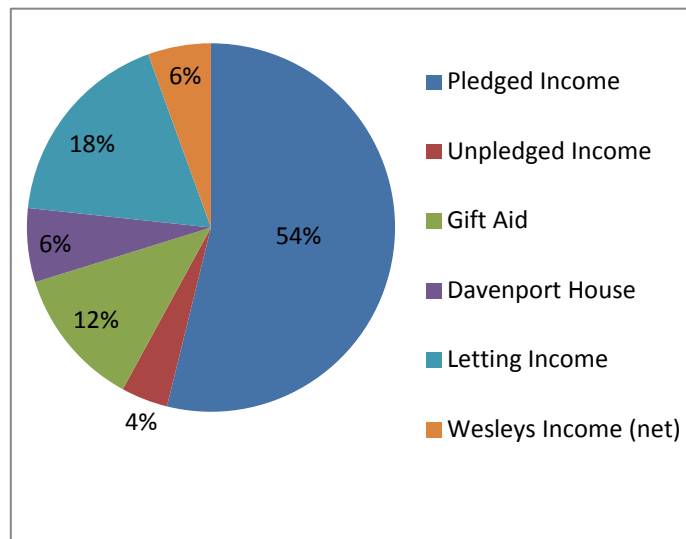


Figure 10 - HSMC Income 2013-14

When we add our pledged giving and Gift Aid to the additional 4 per cent of our income (£10,750) that is from unpledged giving (mainly loose change in the offertory plate), it means that just less than **70 per cent of our total income is from our members.**

Put starkly, our own giving to the work of this church does not actually cover the cost of the personnel we employ. That funding gap is currently bridged from three other sources:

- The ground rent we receive for Davenport House, the doctors surgery developed on Bowers Way on our land, accounts for 6 per cent of our income (£17,000)
- The letting income we receive from external organisations using our premises accounts for 18 per cent of our income (£46,530)
- In recent years, 5 per cent of our net income (£14,500) has come from Wesleys - our wonderful coffee shop run by our own amazing volunteers.

The headline statistic from the above analysis is that our fundamental source of income is and will remain the pledged giving of our members and supporters, and, as we shall see, this is becoming a particular area of concern and focus for our Finance Team.

e. A More Detailed Analysis of Our Pledged Giving

As our own pledged giving is so crucial, it is worth pausing briefly to look at it in more detail. In doing so it is important to note that only our Gift Aid Secretary knows how much each individual contributes to the work of God at High Street Methodist Church (together with our Treasurer in the case of those of us who give by Standing Order). The Gift Aid Secretary needs to know this in order to claim the tax on our offering, and he (like our Treasurer) is very good at ensuring that this personal information remains strictly private and confidential.

The following breakdown of our pledged giving has, therefore, been provided by him in an anonymous format. And for the purpose of what follows our ages have been discerned! This is what he discovered:

- ***Currently only 60 per cent of our church members pledge to give regularly to High Street Methodist Church***
- ***Of the pledged income we do get (£141,000):***
 - ***Around two-thirds is given by just 42 members***
 - ***A quarter is given by the over 80s***
 - ***61 per cent is given by those over 70 years old***
 - ***Just 8 per cent is given by those under 50 years old.***

To this we can add that:

- ***In recent years we have received very little income from legacies from members.***

In many respects these financial facts reflect the age-profile of our congregations that we looked at earlier, and thereby simply reinforce what we have already concluded: That we want to work on making new members such that our age-profile is no longer skewed to the older end of the spectrum.

Amongst existing members, attendees and supporters, we want to encourage a spirit of regular, generous giving that recognises the tremendous work of God at High Street will only continue to thrive and to grow through our financial support.

The 2014 stewardship campaign, scheduled for June 2014, will provide us each with a fresh opportunity to consider our means and prayerfully review our giving.

5. OUR VISION: What is God calling us to do and to be?

'Where there is no vision, the people perish.'

Proverbs 29.18

The facts and figures about our people and our finances suggest that, unless we wish to continue along the slow path of decline, something must be done to change our course. We have every reason for hope because, as we have already seen, the evidence of our own eyes suggests that the green shoots of renewal are already sprouting. Furthermore, experience suggests that people of every generation still give themselves and their money very willingly and generously to the things they believe worthwhile; things that capture their imagination. And surely the Church has been entrusted with the most worthwhile and captivating thing possible: Nothing short of the good news of God's transforming love in Jesus Christ. Many of us can vouch for the fact that absolutely nothing on earth can top being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Over the past six months at High Street we have been encouraged through sermons, Bible studies and various meetings to prayerfully consider what it is that God is calling us to do and to be. In this respect there has been much talk of our need to have clarity of vision. What follows is a summary of what, in the scriptures, has resonated with us as we have listened, talked and prayed together.

a. The Focus of God's Sending Love is THE WORLD

Perhaps the most famous verse in the Bible is John 3.16 which points to the reality that the focus of God's love in sending Jesus was not the church but the world. The church does not, therefore, exist for its own benefit but rather to share in God's mission to His much-loved world. As someone once put it, it is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission that has a church in the world!

**"YOU are the SALT OF THE EARTH...
YOU are the LIGHT OF THE WORLD...
let your light shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds
and glorify your Father in heaven."
Matthew 5.13-16**

**"For God so loved
the world
that he gave
his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him
shall not perish
but have eternal life..."
John 3.16**

Our number-one-priority as a church, therefore, must be to play our full part in God's world-focused work. As Jesus himself put it, when we live as his disciples we are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world". We are intended by the grace of God to have

such an impact on the world within which we live that others are led to glorify God. In other words, the church is only properly being the church of Jesus Christ when its focus is outwards and beyond itself. As the theologian Emil Brunner said, "The church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning." So long as we are constantly focusing on and being shaped by God's mission of love to the world then

we will thrive. But if we are to maintain our effectiveness for reaching this ever-changing world with God's love, then it is essential that we are constantly re-focusing our attention on the task in hand and re-shaping the way we work to ensure we are always being as effective as we possibly can.

b. We are More a DISPERSED-CHURCH than we are a GATHERED-CHURCH

As church members we spend a few hours each week gathered together for such activities as corporate worship, prayer, Bible study and fellowship. But the majority of our waking hours are spent elsewhere; in our homes, work-places and a whole variety of other spaces that constitute the world in which we are called to be salt and light for Christ.

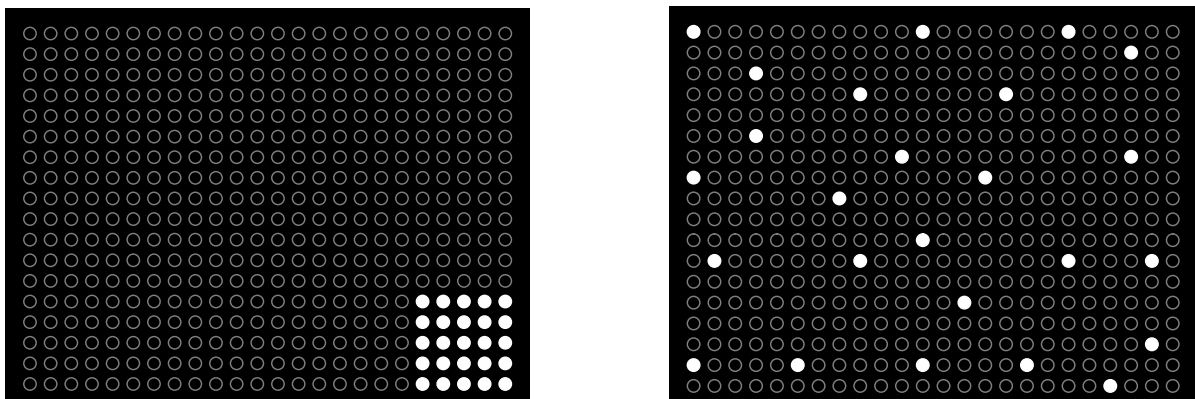


Figure 11 – Images of Gathered Church and Dispersed Church

The Imagine Project, run by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, has found that most people can give a maximum of 10 hours per week to gathered church activities, leaving around 110 hours per week for work, family and leisure. The key question they encourage local churches to ask is: **“How can we best use the 10 hours that we spend together to equip one another to live well for Christ in the other 110?”**

Significantly, the New Testament shows that Jesus himself used a gathering-and-dispersing model of mission for his own disciples. He initially called them to himself, where they encountered God in a fresh way and were equipped as God's people. He then sent them out to share in the work of extending God's kingdom, where again they encountered God in a fresh way! When they next returned to Jesus, they brought joyful news of all they had witnessed God doing in the world.

‘Jesus went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out evil spirits.’
Mark 3.13-15

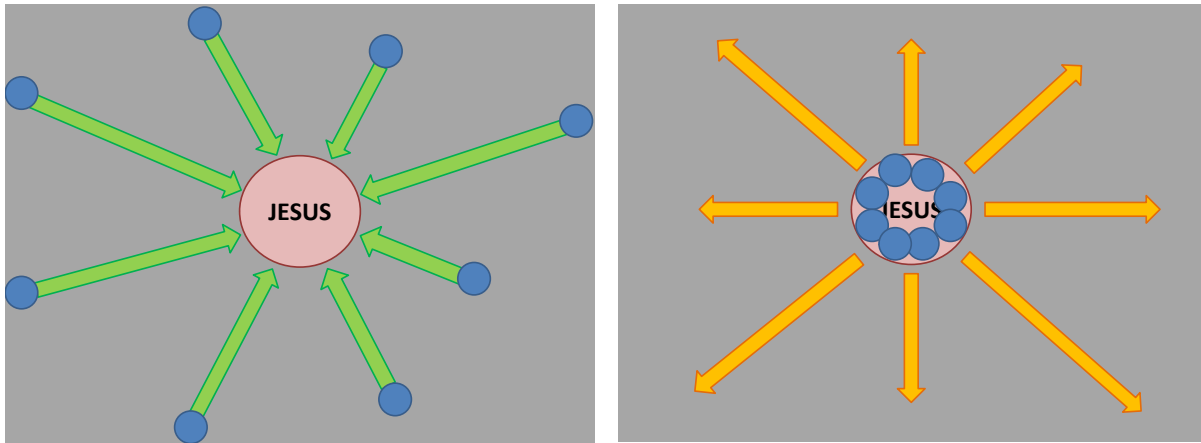


Figure 12 – A New Testament Gathering-and-Dispensing Model of Mission

If we apply this same model at High Street Methodist Church then our main purpose in gathering together will be to encounter God and to be equipped as God’s people so that each time we disperse we are better able to share in extending God’s kingdom wherever it is that we spend the rest of our time.

In the light of this, all those gathered for our Vision Day were asked:

1. When we disperse where do you spend your time and what roles do you fill?
2. How might the church better enable you to be salt and light in those places and roles?

The full answers we gave are listed in Appendix 3a and 3b, and they demonstrate just how long and varied is the reach of High Street Methodist Church.

When we disperse we work as medical professionals and charity fundraisers, writers and office workers, child therapists and local government managers, school teachers and carers for the elderly, researchers and accountants, trainers and facilitators, business management consultants and leaders of Christian mission organisations, environmental workers and lawyers, engineers and hospice workers, service delivery managers and PhD students, etc.

When we disperse we volunteer our time and expertise to school governing bodies and U3A, Probus and the Red Cross, the local Children’s Centre and the local scouts and beavers, the Community Meeting Point and the residents’ association, Mencap and the Harpenden Hospital Friends, prison visiting and charity shop running, etc.

When we disperse we are grandmothers and grandfathers, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, husbands and wives, dog walkers and home educators, housekeepers and carers, baby sitters and taxi drivers, etc.

When we disperse we occupy our leisure time with the running club and golf club, in the swimming pool and gym, gardening and carving stone, visiting museums and walking, singing and talking, kayaking and cleaning, learning Greek and Spanish, tending an allotment and painting icons, going to the pub and cleaning out pigs(!), etc.

When we disperse some of us return to the church premises to help in Wesley's cafe and the Annexe youth centre, in Building Blocks, Butterflies and Messy Church, in committees and choirs, in visiting the bereaved and housebound, in welcoming visitors and doing administration, etc.

And to enable us better to be salt and light for Christ in these places the help we would value includes:

- Friendship, support, social networking and community
- Small groups for fellowship, Bible study and prayer
- Prayer that is specific to the situations we face
- Variety of prayer opportunities
- Variety of worship
- Marriage, parenting and Alpha courses
- Biblical preaching and teaching that relates to everyday life
- Groups and activities specific to men
- Work with families, children and youth
- Counselling and security
- Inspiration and challenge
- Testimonies
- Discipleship training and workshops
- Unpressured space to be
- Help with sharing faith and events to which we can invite others
- Practical help and care according to the needs of each.

c. Overarching Vision and Strategy for High Street on a Single Side of Paper

In recent months I have sought to crystallise onto a single side of A4 what it is that God seems to be calling High Street Methodist Church to do and to be. This draft "Vision and Strategy" which is set out on the next page is the product of much prayer, Bible study and consultation, and with the approval of our Church Stewards, was presented to our General Church Meeting. It received a very warm response.

High Street Methodist Church Draft Vision & Strategy

As part of the Methodist “discipleship movement shaped for mission”

OUR VISION is:

Lives, relationships and communities in this world transformed by the love of God in Jesus Christ

OUR STRATEGY for sharing in this work of God is to:

**Encounter God;
Equip God’s people;
Extend God’s Kingdom.**

To this end,
alongside our fellow Christians
Christ calls us to know Him and to make Him known.

Therefore,
when gathered together corporately
or dispersed as individuals,
we at all times and in all places
by the grace of God
seek to be the salt and light of the world:
Filled with the Spirit of God;
Following the Son of God;
All for the glory of God.

Corporately
we believe God has called us
to be a welcoming, outward-reaching and diverse all-age community
living and growing for the glory of God
by making, nurturing, equipping and sending
disciples of Jesus Christ
who are continually being
filled, transformed, led and empowered by God’s Spirit
to actively share in God’s mission of love to the world
as ambassadors of Christ.

Individually
we believe God calls us each to seek God’s grace:
to grow in our love for God and for our neighbour;
to grow in the likeness of Christ our Saviour;
to be diligent in helping those who are in any need;
to be disciplined in personal prayer, Bible study and worship; and
through the joyful offering of ourselves, our time and our money
to play our full part as members of Christ’s body: The Church.

In their small groups those gathered for Vision Day reconsidered those steps they previously suggested may be taken to enable this church to better reflect the make-up of the population of Harpenden (listed in Appendix 2), and asked which of these were in line with the draft Vision and Strategy statement.

The groups each concluded that generally all of those steps previously considered fell squarely within the draft church Vision and Strategy.

As a final exercise, in small groups, we considered three strategic areas in terms of what things can we do to:

1. Enable everyone to encounter God
2. Encourage everyone to be a whole-life disciple
3. Share in God's work of love in the world.

The full list of responses are listed in Appendices 4a, 4b and 4c, and interestingly many of the groups found that in many cases those initiatives that seek to address one of the questions seem in reality to address all three!

The initiatives identified that would enable everyone to encounter God include:

- Putting on large ecumenical worship and Bible-teaching events
- Variety in worship (timing and days of the week, as well as style)
- Random acts of kindness
- Building community and relationships
- Growing the variety and number of house groups
- Being active in wider society
- Faith sharing
- Running marriage and parenting courses
- Recognising and using our God-given gifts.

The initiatives identified that would encourage everyone to be whole-life disciples include:

- Prayer – look to God
- Testimonies in services about what God is doing in our lives
- Training for faith sharing, ministry and discipleship
- Theology courses
- Encourage all to join house groups and small groups
- Promote better relationships
- Challenging preaching relevant to discipleship.

And the initiatives identified to share in God's work of love in the world include:

- More focus on prayer
- Supporting charitable work such as Azalea and SHARE
- Share in local and other field missions
- Serve the local community as, for example, a Town Councillor, School Governor, charity volunteer
- Share your gifts, talents and testimonies.

Appendix 1 - Green Shoots at High Street

The General Church Meeting divided into a number of small groups for this first exercise.

Exercise 1: *Just as there are signs all around us of the new growth of Spring, many have expressed the view that God is also leading High Street Methodist Church into a new season of growth. Where do you see green shoots at High Street Methodist Church?*

All the responses are listed below under basic category headings:

Atmosphere and Expectancy

- An increased enthusiasm generally
- A sense of expectation
- Atmosphere more positive than 10 years ago - even last year
- Excitement about this next season
- Faith and growing in faith
- Feeling comfortable coming here.

Junior Church

- Beginners and Stars
- Growth in Junior Church
- Growing Junior Church
- Growth of after-sermon activities for children
- Junior Church especially Beginners and Stars
- Junior Church growing
- Junior Church is growing
- Lots of little children
- More children in Junior Church
- New children in Junior Church.

Leadership

- New leadership within ministry team
- You and Sally are nice new green shoots.

Membership Growth

- Families joining
- New members.

Outreach: Social Action & Evangelism

- Food Bank
- Growth through Alpha
- Increase / Continuation / Build up of Alpha
- More recognition by the community as being a welcoming place which is involved with it
- More freedom to speak about faith outside of Sunday services (due to sense of expectation; for example, in Wesley's)

- Recent Alpha courses welcoming people from outside High Street
- SHARE scheme
- SHARE - wide involvement
- Youth Alpha.

Partnerships

- Churches Together in Harpenden more active
- Links with other agencies.

Prayer

- Mark introducing prayer ministry after services
- People coming into church during the week to pray (individuals, not church members).

Technology and Resources

- Range of people using resources increasing
- We love Lewis! (AV).

Young Families

- Babies attending General Church Meeting
- Baptisms continually taking place Building Blocks
- Building Blocks
- Building Blocks
- Building Blocks
- Growth in Young Families - people
- Increase in number of young families attending on a Sunday
- Increase of new families (young)
- Mark and Sally have brought in more 30 and 40 year-olds which in turn has led to more in Junior Church
- More young families
- Young families with children.

Youth

- After school club
- After school clubs
- After school club - Increase in numbers
- After school with Yener
- Annexe
- FUEL and Renewal
- Growth in people attending Yener's groups
- Increase in Renewal for 14+ teenagers
- New team of volunteers - young
- Non-church-going youth coming to week-time sessions
- Potentially four new interns
- Renewal
- The Annexe
- Youth
- Youth

- Youth ministry
- Young people
- Youth work
- Youth work has doubled over the last 12 months.

Wesleys

- The effectiveness of Wesleys in making people welcome
- Wesleys
- Wesleys
- Wesleys especially Saturdays
- Wesleys is growing with Mums and children
- Wesleys vibrant.

Worship

- Alternative service is full and growing
- A new local preacher
- Attendance up
- Congregations growing at worship services. New people in both services
- Evening Services
- FUEL
- Growth in The Hall
- Growing numbers at Tuesday communion?
- Hall service
- Hall Services
- Hall Service, queue to get in
- Increase in numbers in Hall Services
- Loving the new songs in the Hall service.
- New choir members
- New members in choir - young
- New people coming to church each week - standing room only
- Number of people attending services
- The Hall
- Worship leaders course
- Young people involved in worship
- Younger people coming to church.

Appendix 2 – Redressing the Population Imbalances at High Street

The General Church Meeting returned to their small groups for this second exercise.

Exercise 2: *What steps might we take to enable this church to reflect better the age profile of Harpenden?*

Build capacity for expansion

- Encourage more adults to help in Junior Church so we are in a position to welcome more children
- Encourage new people to take up roles, even minor ones or “one-off” help so they make friends and begin to get more involved
- Find ways to equip existing members better to extend the kingdom e.g. by post-Alpha course, or alternative to Alpha as well as ordinary Alpha
- Increase numbers of those who are willing to help in youth work (and elsewhere)
- More volunteers to go into schools talking to children
- Training volunteers in Junior Church and Youth Fellowship (you **have** to train to be worship leaders but **anyone** can lead Junior Church)
- Male role models – help in Junior Church.

Child-centred Initiatives

- Games night – for children – weekday
- Sunday School doesn't have to be on a Sunday
- Summer holiday club
- Need very good teaching in Sunday Junior Church groups
- Events for children e.g. Veggie Tales sleepover
- Junior Church services need to be at a time when children can come (week?) (Sunday afternoon ?4 pm) – with other groups.

Family-focused Initiatives

- Baby-sit children so that families can come
- Be creative in terms of offering worship at times which fit in with modern family life e.g. Building Blocks is bursting at the seams
- Initiate whole-family events at weekends – family time is precious
- Arrange more events for people in their 40s so they bring families
- Focus on children as you bring them in, it will draw in their parents....
- Being flexible with service times
- Having different times for various services to accommodate young people
- Afternoon services for those children taking part in sport on Sundays
- Infiltrate Building Blocks
- Mothers/Children party e.g. Easter Egg Hunt in church (to target non-church goers – we are friendly).

Inter-Generational Initiatives

- Generations coming together
- National Religious Youth Survey in USA: More parental, adults, mentors etc. engaging with youth. (Not just a youth leader)

- Open homes to young people and youth
- Outreach Together (All age)
- Lead Junior Church at any age
- Events for all-ages e.g. train days.

Men-centred Initiatives

- More men's groups. Pub, breakfast, fitness, sports
- Arrange more male-orientated events (sports)
- Hold events of special interest to men
- Where are the "men and boys" on Sunday mornings?
- Events for dads and sons. More men needed in junior church.
- Activities and outreach aimed at men
- Focus on **whole families** rather than "men" specifically? - Men reticent to express "feelings", would "men only" or "men-targeted" services/meetings help?
- Rethink our offering to Men
- Men's breakfast at church or somewhere else once a month
- Pub evenings for men – start up a darts team!
- Football team, league with other churches
- Pub, for men No. 1
- Maybe have coffee in Wesleys for the dads!
- Do we need to start up more "Men's Groups" with programmes directed to "younger" men's interests
- More adventurous activities: paintballing; football; skydiving; running; cycling
- Men's activities e.g. football, pub, "Dads and lads"
- Jail break type ideas
- Men's breakfast and bacon
- All male activities – church meeting in a pub?
- Film nights and sports for men. Sport on TV night
- A men's group – Bible study group
- A year of men's activities – eating, drinking, sport
- Men's weekend away – fathers and sons at Lea Abbey for example (mothers and daughters too to encourage other groups)
- Men Group. Target men with men's interests e.g.: Watching Rugby; ? Bowling Night; Golf Day; Men's Breakfast; Bacon Butties; Model Railway Club.

Prayer

- Prayer
- Vibrant, healing Jesus ministry.

Research

- We should visit other successful churches to see their ideas
- We should ask those here, today, in each category what **they** want
- Leaflet whole population as to what they want .

Schools' Work

- Connection with schools.

University Student Initiatives

- Connecting with young people while they are at university and not losing that sense of connection (Students Outside University Parameters: Soup Group)
- Maintain better contact with children at University
- University returners – to keep in contact .

Worship Initiatives

- Look at how we might involve more young people in worship (e.g. remembering that many sports are now played on Sunday)
- Open Wesleys on a Sunday -> leading to Café Church
- Drop-in services – with Wesleys open
- Services at other times
- Revive Café Church
- Do we need more worship services during the week?
- Challenging preaching
- Different times for corporate worship: Saturdays; weekday
- Hold services at Harpenden Rugby Club!
- One service a year for younger people – advertised heavily
- Younger people involved in worship
- Different service types – style; time; length
- Sunday mornings that make people want to come rather than what they would otherwise do.

Young-Adult Focused

- Rethink our offering to young couples
- Rethink our offering to young adults
- Young adults – introductory events to bring people in, most “out there” are secular, no interest in “church”
- More social occasions to which “younger” people can be encouraged to attend and thus encouraged to try out worship
- More “buzzy” for young adults (<40s)
- More things to suit people working long hours
- Lunch for youngsters (like Alpha)
- Meetings where people could come who didn’t have faith but could talk about what they believe – less evangelical than Alpha? Can’t expect people without faith to want to come to worship services
- Alpha Course and also another course etc. more reasoning and questioning
- Younger generation are going to bring people in more than the older
- Need to formulate a system to encourage faith – then they will come
- Older 60s people come because they have faith. Twenty year-olds do not generally have the faith of older generation and will not want to come.

Youth-centred Initiatives

- YF 14 to 18, re-invigorate with leadership
- Giving teenagers responsibility
- Sunday afternoon youth club

- Homework club Sunday afternoon
- Development of youth pastoral ministry
- Rethink our offering to young people in relation to competing activities on a Sunday
- Sports service
- Extend our youth work to more meetings during the week and more meetings for all ages
- More structure to After School Chill – not just come and sit and play on the Xbox
- Getting alongside the youth: As in more relaxed atmosphere/venue; e.g. Skate Park.

Other Initiatives

- Invite a friend day
- Sunday morning sport?
- Use major events for church outreach
- Website for outreach
- Maybe have famous band/singer who is a Christian to perform at High Street? Or on neutral ground.
- Artistic workshops
- More outreach in town
- Using church premises for variety of activities in community
- Reunion for old/lapsed/former members
- Through estate agents find new entrants to Harpenden then strategically contact new people to Harpenden
- Social media opportunities
- Something you can invite your friends to
- Outreach – showing mission
- More local outreach.

Other Comments

- Relevant for the times: constantly changing; renew; focus on Jesus
- Get rid of the stigma that “church is boring” (lasar tag) – attractive
- Be enthusiastic
- We recognise none of this will happen unless the underpinning of the finances is made secure!
- They belong to us and our lives before they believe
- In summary, what we were saying is – it was a friend/neighbour who brought us along to church, sharing “life” with our neighbours and friends -> leads them to come to where we worship.
- Our neighbours, family and friends BELONG to us and are included in our lives before they come to believe in Jesus. OUR PRIORITY we feel is this statement.

Appendix 3a – Where are you when we disperse?

Those present at the General Church Meeting were asked:

Exercise 3a:

1. *When we disperse where do you spend your time and what roles do you fill?*

Tennis club	Shopper
Home	Grandfather-Librarian
Family	Reader
Holiday	Engineer
Church	Manager
Husband	Leader
Father	House Group member
Brother	
Neighbour	Entertainer
Steward	Cinema goer
Wife	Theatre goer
Mother	Swimmer
Orphans No More	Pastoral visitor
Friend	Book Club member
Home-educator	Building Blocks
Parent	Butterflies
YWAM Community Leader	Child therapist
YWAM National Operations Leader	School teacher
Consultant	Local government manager
Charity Fundraiser	School governor
Writer	Accompanist
Office worker	DIYer
Hospital	Gardener
New business	Chair of governors
Finance	Local preacher
Grandmother	Property Steward
Dog carer	Church Committee Member
Running Club	Trustee
Encourager	Confidant
Supporter	Researcher
Adventurer	U3A member
Golf Club	Restaurant
Help in Wesleys	Other churches
Help in Annexe	
Worshipper	Poetry writer

Artist
Wesleys customer
Accountant
Daughter
Volunteer
Work colleague
Son
Fellow follower of Jesus
Textile artist
Sister
Probus member
Visit the sick
Charity shop worker
Client companies
Delegate
At my desk
On the phone
On the internet
Trainer
Facilitator
Housekeeper
Neighbour
Visitor
With God
Carer for elderly
Support group worker
Church worker
Teacher
Aunty
Twins Club
Choirs
Voluntary worker
Red Cross
Gym
Swimming pool
Museum visitor
Walker
Partner
City worker
Singer
Performer
Youth worker
Member of advisory council
Church transport

Stone carver
Talker
Visit relatives
Wesleys
Concert goer
Dog walker
Cross words
Receptionist
House worker
Care for grand children
Caring for children
Keep in touch
Send cards
Telephone call visitor
Bridge Club member
Administrator
Bereavement visitor
Hospice worker
Good friend
Hospice Shop assistant
Do school runs
Daughter-in-law
Support organist
Business consultant
Gardening instructor
Magazine reader
Prayer
Transport the elderly
Town twinning worker
Patient
Reflecting on next steps
Environmental worker
Car driver
Church member
Holiday maker
Keeping fit
Social meetings
Hobbies
YWAMer
PhD student
Spiritual father
Men's Accountability group
Theatre studies
Saturday Club

YWAM ships international
Giving lifts to people
Being hands and feet of Jesus
Home infrastructure handyman
Service delivery manager
Sales
Aftersales
Milton Keynes
Germany
Iberia
On call 7 x 24
Retired
Employer
Cleaner
Retired but busy
Serving rural churches
Coffee mornings
Serving High Street
Showing God's love
Sycamore Tree Course
AquaFit
Badminton Club
Hairdressers
Solicitor
Lawyer
Law committee member Law Society
Law committee member local
Law committee member national
Homemaker

Discussion groups
Website editor
Archivist
Junior Church teacher
Being wrong, always

A state of not understanding
Charities
Solitude
Guide
GP surgery
Dermatology Clinic
Music coach
Cook

Kayaker
Drama student
Family member
Student
Shop assistant
Big sister
Actor
Community member
Ministry director
Mentor
Marine Superintendent
Follower of Christ
Financial supporter
Welcomer
Grandparent
Education committee member
Spouse
Allotment owner
Taking services
Baby sitter
Friday Night Club
Children's Centre volunteer
Beaver leader
School helper
Scout leader
Out and about
Spanish friends
Look after the family
Keep check on my husband
Look after elderly widowed
mother
Parent of teenagers
Running toddler groups
Helping families
Training worship leaders
Community Meeting Point
volunteer
Café Church book group
Post Alpha house group
Meet ex-colleagues
Swimmer
Greenbelt
Church Council
Socialising

Greek learner
Family advisor
Participant
Communion Steward
Secretary and treasurer of residents' association
Doctor
Recorder Group leader
Library helper
Runner
Personal Assistant
Child minder
Visiting my children
Father-in-law
Mencap trustee
Chairman Harpenden Hospital Friends
Trustee Williams Church Music Trust
Anglican Theology Book Club
Icon painter
Member of Forum for Future of Harpenden Hospital
Carer for spouse
Garden for relaxation
Christian Aid
Action for Children
Visit the house bound
International Organ Festival
Visiting gardens
Space to face one's final years
School gates
School trips
Batford Butterflies
Messy Church at Batford
Walking around charity shops
College
Renewal
Clean out girlfriend's pigs
SOUP
Pilates
Listening ear
Getting alongside under-achievers
Travel
Choir member

Charity Walk
Singing
Going to the pub
Visit and share Jesus
Grandson care
Aged father care
Prison visiting childcare
Home things
Visiting lonely people
Assistant gardener
Military Charity
Small business owner
Organiser
Designer
Delivery of service
Spring Harvest
Hairdresser
Duke of Edinburgh meetings

Studying
University
Housemate
Being on my own
Management Consultant
Alone - solitary
Pharmaceutical Company
Provider
IT Consultant
Occasional helper at Scouts
Taxi service to family

Appendix 3b – How might the Church better equip you?

Those present at the General Church Meeting were then asked:

Exercise 3b:

2. How might the church better enable you to be salt and light in those places and roles?

Communicate the Bible	Give me attention
Draw alongside	Give me care
Key friendships	Strengthen my faith to share Jesus
Pray with those who don't pray	Prayer
Prayer support	Training
Witnessing	Relevant events
Pray for family issues	Host creative workshops
Interest in OKM	More corporate prayer
Marriage Course	Challenge my behaviour
Parenting Course	Bible-based teaching that relates to everyday life
Men's group	Pray for me
Church outreach	Course on effective relationships
Youth Group	Prayer support
Children's work	Teaching
Preaching	Conversations one- to-one
Children's activities	Elevated pitch for grabbed conversations
Family	Deeper knowledge of scripture
Men's Groups	Time to reflect life too busy
Buddying	Deeper services
Counselling	Less pressure
Adventurous activities	More café style worship
Social networking	More Linda Woollacott please please
Prayer	Drop in events at church
Inspire	Personal support in caring for the elderly
Security	Salt and Light
Training	Prayer
Part of community	Course on witnessing
Strategies	24/7 Prayer Events
Meet similar people	Worship
Talk to someone	Teaching
Fellowship Group	Harmony
Literature provision	Diversity
Inviting friends to church	Preaching diversity
Strengthen faith through worship	Speakers' diversity
Strengthen faith through fellowship	
Explore faith at a deep level	
Home Group not Bible study	

Need for prayer
Hug me

Reduce time at church
More effective gathering
Inside out church outward looking
Valuing people
Encouragement

Welcome committee excellent
Reliable friendships
Friendships I have confidence in
Inviting people to church
Support church family through prayer
Teaching to increase and develop my faith
Prayer for family illness
Supporting Home Groups
Caring for sick wife
Prayer for our situation
Leaflet outlining what is available at High Street
Leaflet drops
Prayer events for non-church people
Reduce the number of church meetings so I can meet friends outside church
Evangelising
Sharing our faith
Provide relevant worship
Provide lively worship
Scriptural teaching
Opportunities to serve
Caring fellowship
Powerful prayer groups
Preaching series
Social activities
House Groups that are not in a rut
Share the Good News with those at work
Testimony of sharing the Good News
Men's Accountability Group to share and pray
Worship
Fellowship
Space to discuss things for my age group
Drama in worship
Drama in outreach
Variety of services
Discussion groups about current issues
Services themed by current events
Prayer for witnessing in social situations
Need to be flexible
Salt and light

Alpha Course
Create church business card
Church visits to schools
Understanding to take time out to visit elderly mother
Parenting Course
Marriage time
Training to work with children
Prayer meetings
Opportunities to worship
Support group for parents who have children with learning difficulties
Bible study and teaching
Age-appropriate events to invite my friends to
How to share my story
Bible-based discussion groups
Speakers
Outreach
Sports-based activities for support when going out in the world
Broad-based family weekends
WOW fellowship please continue
Prayer
Fundraising
Introducing the subject of Jesus
More enthusiastic worship
More testimonies
Invite different musicians to join band
Be salt and light
Grand-parenting classes and workshops
Bible teaching
How to give your faith away
Housegroup fellowship
Place to rest
Place for fun
Someone to do the ironing
More in-depth Bible study
Church fulfils a balanced support
Fellowship
Prayer
Training for witness
Prayer for prison work
Prayer for families who no longer come to church
Prayer for confidence in witnessing
Trigger points for spiritual conversations at work
Where to refer people who are in need
How to make connections

Discipleship training to speak about faith with confidence
Prayer to give confidence to speak about faith
Debate and discussion groups to clarify beliefs
Man time to talk and socialise
No guilt trips
Bible training for greater understanding
Learning how to express my beliefs
Alpha Courses
Opportunities to build confidence to talk about your faith
Evangelism courses
Church is with me all the time
Response to Richard Dawkins
How to cope with committed atheists
How to talk to people outside church about our faith
Church involvement in schools
Pray for me
Help my husband and son to come to faith
Speaking about faith
Advising about ethical values
Acting Christ-like
Helping in counselling
How to cope
How to be a carer
Written material to encourage and stimulate the Christian message
Understand the ecological message for all age groups
Attractive material on the Christian faith
How to encourage my non-believing husband
How to encourage my children to find faith
How to understand my doubts
Cannot evangelise when you're unsure yourself
Prayer for college students and staff
Men's Group
Golf Group
Social Groups
Salt and Light
Social events we can invite outsiders to
Support for activities not just the ones you favour
How to enter into discussion about faith
How to approach the subject of faith
Fellowship
Practical ways to evangelise in everyday activities
Activities leading to fellowship and building community
How to start up conversations about Jesus
How to get to know the people in my retirement home and love them

Sermons on how to live for Jesus among people who have no sense of need for him
Crystal-clear ministry that we have real confidence in
Predictable and reliable worship and preaching for friends to come
Stuff that enables Christian living to be seen as exciting, normal, essential
Mentor
Understand God
Give advice to youth ministry
Confidence
Youth holiday clubs
Being a Christian in the workplace
Gift days
Prayer partners
Single fellowship gatherings at weekends
Practical support for carers
Support for those in business working long hours
Fathers Group
How to run children's activities
Teaching
Training
Support Groups
Group activities
Encouraging Christians at work.

Appendix 4a – Encountering God

Those present at the General Church Meeting were asked:

Exercise 4a:

What things can we do to enable everyone to encounter God?

- What events can we focus on that involve the whole population not just the church? e.g. peace
- Create our own Spring Harvest at the church
- Go out into community more
- Representatives in every area of life in Harpenden
- In taking groups on mission take non-church members with them (deliberately)
- Active activities that will suit groups e.g. men
- Revival Time on Harpenden Common. Large tent with pop music like Spring Harvest. For all churches
- Hold a variety of services
- Make contact with **all** age groups – young, middle, old
- Cater better for 20s to 40s age group
- Do we need more **paid** help?
- Breaking away from Sunday as the Church Day and bring a church 7/24 i.e. everyday; all-day so that we can cater for everyone all the time
- Make better use of “social” networking
- Encourage more involvement of church members in other “groups” i.e. L A council membership etc.
- Do we need to remove time constraints from our worship i.e. are we too fixed on 1 hour services; should they be more flexible – 45 minutes or 75 minutes depending on content, etc.

(Although we were asked to think about Question1, we think most of these points apply to all three questions.)

- It’s all about relationship with people, friends, family and neighbours
- Random acts of kindness i.e. set up willing cooks for neighbours, as an idea
- Building community, **give people something to belong to**
- Base the community ideas around FOOD! (i.e. Alpha!)
- To provide diversity of worship **with** harmony and unity. This is **vital**
- Home Groups ---> different times, different types
- Diversity of preachers and styles and music
- Go out to the people ---> we can’t stay in the church
- We need to be aware of all the positive gifts God has given us as a church – to celebrate and use our diversity

- Flash mobs
- Talking to people individually – sharing our faith
- More groups to encourage people through the door:
 - Marriage classes
 - Parenting classes
- Look at our skills and talents, God has given them to us – how can we use them?
- Commitment:
 - Time
 - Money
 - Talents.

Appendix 4b –Equipping God’s People

Those present at the General Church Meeting were asked:

Exercise 4b:

What things can we do to encourage everyone to be whole-life disciples?

- Testimonies
- Prophesying – praying encouragement – led by the Spirit
- Training in Witness
- “Ministry” Training
- Recommendation of good books
- Events – Targeting non-Christians to prove church is:
 - “Fun”
 - “Normal” people
 - Not outdated
 - Doesn’t conflict with science
- We volunteer James Manning!
- Training to share our faith. Responses to The Dawkins Delusion. Equip all to evangelise – perhaps via House Groups
- Encourage all to join House Groups. Nurture non-Christians to join House Groups – or to come to church
- Structure and **agenda** for House Groups to promote the faith
- Do family better – promote better relationships within the church.
- Accountability buddies
- Teaching
- Challenging preaching – relevant to discipleship
- Small groups – possibly different to House Groups – different settings more in tune with all-age lifestyles
- Testimonies and sharing stories about faith in their lives
- Power of prayer
- Inspirational talks
- Discipleship courses – with “homework”
- Buddying
- More flexibility with services
- Regular worship and development of our own Christian lives so that we have faith to share on a salt and light basis in the community
- We need to get right:
 - Our devotional life
 - Our giving in terms of time, talents and finance
 - Being made welcome and being welcoming
 - Encourage and support fellowship in small groups strengthening in the church office and prayers
 - Seek the discerning of the Holy Spirit
 - Think particularly of what we can do for ministry to men of all ages

- Get all sorts of people to give their testimonies in services
- Make opportunities to share about our lives outside church e.g. TTT gives people chance to build relationships
- Short teaching courses e.g. on a theme or working through particular books
- In-depth theological (Bible-based) discussions led by “qualified” people. Don’t be frightened of intellectual challenge
- Advertising courses elsewhere e.g. St Albans Abbey Certificate in Theology and facilitating attendance e.g. offering lifts.

Appendix 4c – Extending God’s Kingdom

Those present at the General Church Meeting were asked:

Exercise 4c:

What things can we do to share in God’s work of love in the world?

- Youth Work
- Azalea
- SHARE – Food Bank
- One or two people visit each member in their place of work or activity – maybe over lunch, pray with them
- Gather people working in a sphere, meet, discuss and pray. (Report back to the local church)
- Testimonies in the service about seeing God at work in their work
- Create space for community in the town of Harpenden (with Christian involvement)
- E.g. Community Dance in old days, something that brings people together in the broader sense of community
- Some kind of joint outreach together HOPE 2014 style
- Study Group on Tim Keller’s book: “Every Good Endeavour”, on work
- Town-wide Mission – with other churches
- Be involved as individuals in charitable community efforts – governor of school, Community Meeting Point – or as individuals for neighbours in need
- Challenge people’s thought processes by our responses, by our Christ-likeness
- Enabling people to understand relevance of faith in the world of work – through teaching
- Draw together:
 - Teachers
 - Bankers
 - Parents
 - Doctorsto discuss and learn and go out into the world
- Understand other people’s faiths to engage with them
- Always remember that the Holy Spirit is there and allow Holy Spirit to awake something in the other person
- Encourage and support the sending of people on mission work
- Organised and specific prayer for field mission work
 - Get involved!!
- Active mission to Harpenden
- “Bring a friend” – outreach services
- Know your own testimony and be prepared to give it in 90 seconds
- How we are individually with people we meet in our everyday lives
- Make our social lives non-Christian!

- Pray for opportunities. More focus on Prayer at Church – Prayer meetings, prayer partners, prayer chains
- Recognising our God-given gifts e.g. non-money gift day and testimonies -> being prepared to share our own inside and outside church
- Having “Noise” days in the community – clear litter, decorate, IMPORTANT to offer practical support especially to the elderly
- Having groups and people responsible for checking on each other, especially for those not in House Groups
- Importance of small groups
- Events outside church to invite others to – picnics, socials etc.
- Closer relationships with the charities we support, beyond just donating to them
- Sharing testimonies
- Encouragement of Alpha, Youth Alpha and, or, similar
- Fellowship and training sessions and groups
- Importance of meals – easier to share
- Embracing all people – Variety
- Encountering God leads into discipleship.